



# NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY  
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

**TODD P. GRAVES**

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Contact Don Ledford, Public Affairs • (816) 426-4220 • 400 East Ninth Street, Room 5510 • Kansas City, MO 64106

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**NOVEMBER 4, 2002  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE VIGILANT AGAINST ELECTION FRAUD**

**KANSAS CITY, Mo.** – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced today the appointment of Assistant United States Attorney Dan Stewart to serve as District Election Officer for the Western District of Missouri.

This appointment was made pursuant to a nationwide Department of Justice Voting Integrity Initiative announced by Attorney General Ashcroft in Washington, D.C. on October 8, 2002. The purpose of this nationwide federal law enforcement program, which the department has implemented during national general elections since the late 1960's, is to ensure public confidence in the integrity of the election process by strengthening and enhancing the department's efforts to protect voting rights and to prosecute election crime throughout the country.

"Election fraud dilutes the worth of votes honestly cast," Graves said. "It also corrupts the essence of our representative form of government. As a crime against both the individual and the government, it will be dealt with promptly and aggressively."

Stewart, who is chief of the General Crimes Unit, will serve as District Election Officer for two years, and in that capacity will supervise the investigation and prosecution of election fraud matters in this district and coordinate the district's efforts with Department of Justice prosecutors in Washington, D.C. As part of his responsibilities as District Election Officer, Stewart will supervise a team of Assistant United States Attorneys and Special Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) on November 5, 2002, while the polls are open. These individuals will be on duty in this district on election day to receive complaints of election fraud. Graves and Stewart can be reached by the public at the Kansas City office, 816-426-3122 or 800-733-6558.

**(MORE)**

## **ELECTION FRAUD**

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The FBI also will have Special Agents available in each field office and resident agency in this district to receive allegations of election fraud on election day. The FBI can be reached by the public at 816-512-8200.

Graves explained that most forms of election crime are easily recognized, such as voter bribery, voter intimidation, and ballot forgery. Other forms of election fraud are more subtle. It is, for example, a federal offense to seek out the elderly, the socially disadvantaged, or the illiterate for the purpose of subjugating their electoral will. Furthermore, every voter has the right to mark his or her ballot in private, free from the watchful eye of election partisans.

Because the administration of elections is primarily a state, rather than a federal, function, most election questions are matters of state law (such as electioneering too close to the polls), administered by state officials, and questions about many aspects of management of elections should be referred to state and county election officials. Nonetheless, Graves said, there are many federal statutes governing and penalizing certain types of conduct in connection with elections, such as:

- \*Paying voters to register to vote or to participate in elections where federal candidates are on the ballot.

- \* Preventing voters from participating in elections where federal candidates are on the ballot.

- \* Impersonating voters to cast ballots in the name of voters who do not actually vote in federal elections.

- \* Intimidating voters through physical duress or economic threats.

- \* Malfeasance by election officials acting under color to law to do such things as diluting ballots with invalid ones (ballot box stuffing) or rendering false tabulations of votes or preventing valid voter registrations or votes from being given effect in elections.

- \* Qualifying fictitious individuals to vote in federal elections.

- \* Knowingly procuring eligibility to vote for federal office by persons who are not entitled to vote under state law.

“The detection of election fraud depends in large part on the watchfulness and cooperation of the American electorate,” Graves said. “It is imperative that those who have been asked to participate in questionable election practices, or who have observed or have specific information regarding electoral corruption, make that information available immediately to my Office or to the FBI. The cooperation of this country's citizens in helping to protect the sanctity of the ballot box is crucial. It is also appreciated.”

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This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

[www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow](http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow)